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OPEN LETTERS.

Dr. J. P. Campbell's "Biological Instruction."

I was interested to read in the last number of THE GAZETTE an appreciative review of the recent work of Dr. J. P. Campbell of the University of Georgia concerning the methods of biological instruction in American colleges and universities. On account of the inadequate treatment given the subject of botany in the chapter of Dr. Campbell's work which refers to the University of Minnesota, I wrote asking him to explain why he had neglected a department which might have claimed some attention in such a book as he was putting forth. I received from him a reply that is so complete an exposition of his intellectual position and capacity for undertaking the broad treatment of biological instruction in the United States that I cannot refrain from giving a few sentences wider circulation. Since the letter was in no way confidential I feel at liberty to do this. Dr. Campbell begins by exhibiting great surprise and indignation that I should have dared to call him to account for his inaccuracies. He says: "I am not accustomed to being called to account and asked if I 'have any explanation to offer' nor do I recognize the right of any one to do so, and this letter is only written on the assumption that you expressed yourself more strongly than you thought." In reply I called Dr. Campbell's attention to the fact that in the taking up of such a work as he had attempted he had exposed himself to criticism, and that he would find as his experience in publishing grew wider he might often merit and receive criticism and correction. He assures me in his letter that a circular was sent from Washington to the professor of biology at each institution and from the replies to these circulars his work was compiled. I am informed by Professor C. W. Hall (at that time professor of biology at the University of Minnesota) that he received no such circular; but one was received by the professor of *animal* biology, Dr. H. F. Nachtrieb. This indicates the care with which Dr. Campbell's circulars were sent out. Further, in the list of teachers there was no mention of Professor Hall's name while there was of Professor Nachtrieb's, showing how carefully this table was arranged.

Observing the extraordinary and altogether unnecessary impression that Johns Hopkins University seemed to have made upon Dr. Campbell I took occasion in my letter to him to express my high appreciation of the zoölogical work done at that institution and my very low appreciation of the biological work done by any institution where they are willing to omit one-half of the science. Indeed I indicated a certain feeling of contempt for the burglarious use of the word "biology" which is permitted at this institution which has had such an extraordinary influence upon American biological instruction. To this Dr. Campbell replies with characteristic vigor and enthusiasm. He says: "I cannot help thinking if you had stayed longer at Johns Hopkins and caught more of the spirit of the place you would have found that the instruction in biology is not by any means 'weak' as you are pleased to term it, but that it has taken its present form, so far at least as the strictly undergraduate work goes, simply because they are unhampered by traditions and are free to carry out their ideas of the

relative importance of subjects, and these I admit are a little in advance of the times. In the five years that I worked there I frequently heard the value of botany insisted upon for training children and I also heard Dr. Martin emphasize the necessity of studying animal and vegetable forms together as in the general biology course."

We have here the pleasing suggestion that botanical work is of value for training children! It would be difficult to ask for a more perfect exhibition of the spirit with which Dr. Campbell came to his task of writing a broad account of biological instruction in America. I should be far from holding Johns Hopkins responsible for any indiscretion of Dr. Campbell, but under the circumstances it seems a matter of distinct regret that any institution in America should permit a man to graduate from a five years course in biology with the notion that the science of our food-supply, to put it upon a purely economic basis to say nothing of any other, is a fit thing to amuse children with. It is, too, an interesting thing to note in these days of specialization, that it is the zoölogist who wishes to talk of "biology" (which is after all only a synonym of the old phrase, "natural history"); while the botanists, recognising the twin sciences, are willing to give each a place and name. It is possible that the botanists are somewhat in advance of the times, as Dr. Campbell would say.

I have written thus at length because I feel that I am in a position to show the botanists of the country somewhat of the animus that has been displayed in the compilation under government control of what should have been a valuable, accurate, broad-minded, adequate and complete account of the biological work in American colleges. It is unfortunate that it was intrusted to a gentleman who after five years of what he supposes is biological instruction—and I have no reason to think that Dr. Campbell is insincere in supposing that he is a biologist—has the pleasant way of characterising botany as valuable for the training of children.—CONWAY MACMILLAN, *University of Minnesota, Minneapolis.*

NOTES AND NEWS.

MR. W. W. CALKINS has some interesting words regarding the study of lichens in America, in *Science* for August 26.

PROFESSOR GEO. F. ATKINSON has been appointed Assistant Professor of Cryptogamic Botany at Cornell University.

MR. HENRY E. SEATON, Instructor in Botany in Indiana University, has been appointed Assistant Curator at the Harvard Herbarium.

DR. GEORGE VASEY is the accredited representative of the Department of Agriculture and Smithsonian Institution to the International Congress of Botanists at Genoa.

A PRESENTATION of the question of priority in botanical nomenclature from the ethical point of view is given by Prof. L. M. Underwood in *Science* for Aug. 26 (xx, 16).